Training and News for the Seattle Auxiliary Communication Service

ACS in a Changing World

Making Our Organization More Vital

By Mark Sheppard N7LYE

With all the new advances in consumer electronics and high tech wireless communications I think it is fair to ask ourselves: Is ham radio still a viable resource in our community's disaster response strategy?

After participating in two recent City table-top disaster drills I can with some confidence answer this question: Yes. I spent two recent Fridays with the Mayor, his cabinet and officials from several City departments as well as representatives from other jurisdictions and agencies. Over 120 of us were crowded into a room simulating the EOC and the City's major operating centers. We first experienced the catastrophic loss of the regions power grid and then our water supply. Both were caused by terrorist explosions, the later event caused a devastating flood. It became clear that the services of our MST and ACS teams where in high demand. Early in the disaster officials were calling for the hams to set up communications because everyday systems were over loaded and eventually failed. Our teams were called in to provide essential communications with the hospitals and shelters and to provide reports of injury and damage from the field.

Well, it is somewhat reassuring to be needed but at the same it causes me a major distress when you think about what it will take to stand up to such a mission. As we have lamented before we are too few. What can we do to grow and train our ranks? Well, we are making progress – we are implementing the plan we introduced last spring.

As you will remember – we introduced a new community based ACS structure. We have established six geographic zones and appointed a team leader for each. (see ACS Zone Map, page 4) We are in the process of getting organized. The first priority is to build the teams through recruitment and to conduct training in the zones to prepare for our mission and cover the community center posts. Our goal is to be ready for a Communications field Exercise in May. More about this at our November 20th meeting.

QRV?

QRV? = "Are you prepared?"

QRV? is the Newsletter of the Seattle Auxiliary Communication Service, City of Seattle, Emergency Management

Seattle ACS Net
Meets weekly on Mondays at 7:00 p.m.—Bill Ehler K7NZV Net Manager
146.96 MHz PSRG repeater/-600 KHz offset/103.5 tone

Seattle ACS Frequency Plan
Program your radios so they always transmit the indicated tone. We rely on this for automatic access to supporting systems.

Check-in & Event Coordination Frequency
146.96 MHz repeater/-600 KHz offset/103.5 tone
In case of repeater failure use 146.96 simplex with 103.5 tone. You will be assigned an operating frequency for passing traffic. We want to keep the check-in and coordination frequency as clear as possible.

Operating frequencies
These frequencies are to be used for passing message traffic between field posts and the Seattle EOC.

UHF repeaters: Primary System

443.650 MHz ACS-North repeater. Tone 141.3 Hz (Xmt and Rcv) Primary area served: Northeast and Northwest zones
443.000 MHz ACS-Central repeater. Tone 141.3 Hz (Xmt and Rcv) Primary area served: Central East and Central West zones
441.800 MHz ACS-South repeater. Tone 141.3 Hz (Xmt) Primary area served: Southeast and Southwest zones

VHF Simplex: Backup System
ACS operates a north and south remote base that receives and transmits on our two designated simplex frequencies. Tones are mandatory.

146.56 MHz ACS-VHF North. Simplex. Tone 103.5 Hz (Xmt and Rcv)
Planned service area: Northwest, Northeast, and Central-East zones

147.58 MHz ACS-VHF South. Simplex. Tone 103.5 Hz (Xmt and Rcv)
Planned service area: Southwest, Southeast, and Central-West zones

Six Meter Repeater – used for special operations: 53.250, -1.7 MHz offset, MHz tone 100 Hz.

State & County Nets

Washington State Emergency meets Mondays at 5:30 p.m. Saturdays at 9:00 a.m. 3.985 MHz

King County ARES meets Sundays at 8:00 p.m. 146.82 MHz (tone 103.5)

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Please direct letters, articles, and inquiries about *QRV?* to the editor:
Peter Smith N7BYP (206) 284-2098, n7byp@arrl.net

ACS Website: www.cityofseattle.org/eoc/acs

From the Editor

Repeating

I'm sure you've noticed the change in the boilerplate in *QRV?*. It used to contain basic information about ACS as well as essential frequencies and net schedules. It occupied a single column on the inside of the front page. As you've seen in this issue, that boilerplate has been expanded to include much more detailed information about frequencies, nets, as well as check-in and event procedures.

Since the boilerplate arrives with every issue of QRV, I guess one could say that it is a *repeating* reminder of our essential frequencies, nets, and procedures. That brings me to a point I've raised before that bears *repeating*: There is value in consistently, every week, *repeatedly* turning our attention to ACS. It keeps us up-to-date with changing procedures and events. It keeps us in touch with colleagues with whom we'll work in time of need, and it keeps us motivated to continually brush up our needed radio operation and communications skills.

We all lead busy lives, even those of us who have retired. There are commitments to family, work, school, church, and community, all competing for our time and attention. It's all to easy to let ACS slide, to find days, even weeks going by without giving much thought to our organization and its cru-

ACS Unveils New WebEOC System

Leadership Sets Sights on Building Team Capacities and Membership Recruitment

By Jonathan Scherch, KK7PW

On the evening of October 27, ACS leadership met at the EOC to receive a hands-on tutorial for the newly unveiled Web EOC electronic event management system to be used by local, county and state organizations. In attendance were George Boswell, K7YHB, Bill Ehler, K7NZV, Bill Dockstader, W7LSK, Libe Napat, KB7WCE, Christopher Osburn, KD7DVD, Dave Prince, WB0RAZ, Jonathan Scherch, KK7PW, Mark Sheppard, N7LYE, and Matthew Thomas, KD7PPK.

With the guidance of Chris Ewell, each attendee had the opportunity to experience the "in-the-seat" feel of how emergency event data could be inputed, prioritized and calmly coordinated amid what might ordinarily be hectic EmComm conditions. As a result, electronic assessment information could then be speedily shared with officials for their timely processing – an exciting innovation that allows ACS/EOC operations to move further beyond paper and pen message handling.

The WebEOC system features an intuitive interface design, including navigation into and around pages that are simi-

lar to that of web browsers, making them feel familiar and easy to use regardless of prior experience. Using simple keyboard and mouse commands to infill forms and fields with data, the "architecture" of the system allows for data of each terminal to be automatically compiled and made available for viewing at the terminal and via big-screen projection. The user can easily monitor the evolving list of incident reports from field sources as well as access pages that graphically depict activities and/or operations locations for at-a-glance scenarios (i.e. using symbols for search & rescue locations, hazmat incidents, water & gas leaks, fire spots, etc.). Users can even draw shapes for unique depictions (e.g. shape and direction of gas leak plume), type and apply labels, and even access a real-time chat room for intra-terminal communications.

As a work-in-progress, Mark Sheppard, N7LYE noted that this system will likely grow to meet emerging ACS needs and so encouraged us to offer feedback and suggestions on system performance. Copies of the Web EOC user manual were distributed for future reference. Plans are underway for designing and scheduling an ACS practice event, featuring live use of Web EOC to handle team site reports, sometime in spring, 2005.

Following the training, Mark Sheppard, N7LYE led a discussion that further emphasized the functional design of the new ACS city-wide response system and the need for recruitment of
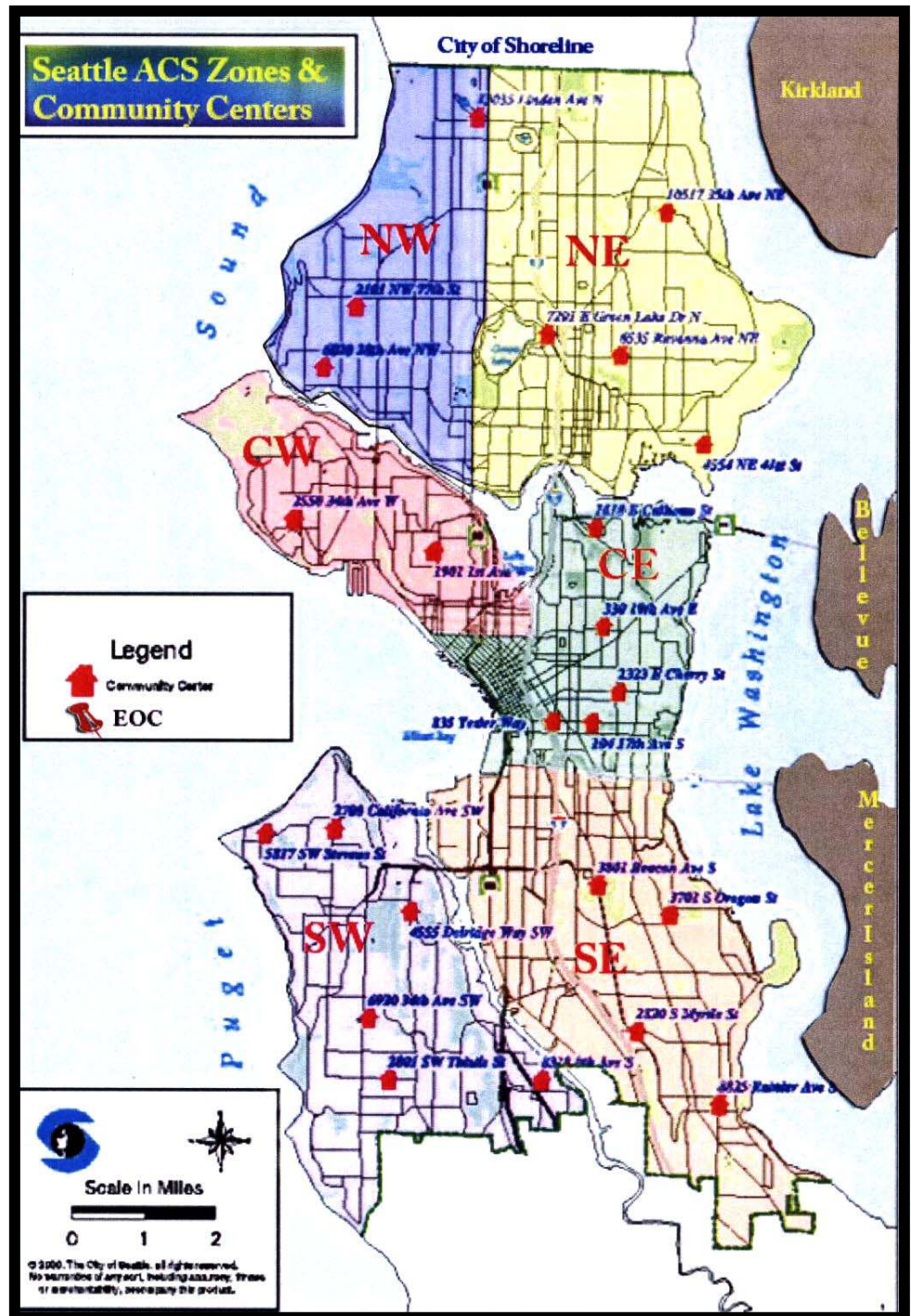
new ACS members to adequately staff the response teams across the six operation zones (estimated staffing requirement for city disaster is 265 registered ACS members; current membership is 60). These zones (and associated teams) represent City of Seattle communities in Northwest, Central-West, Southwest, Northeast, Central-East, and Southeast locales.

To build further ACS capacity, the team leaders agreed to identify and connect with ACS members in their zones in an effort to gradually grow their teams. The team leaders would then work with their teams to design response systems that effectively meet the needs of their zone communities and suit the skills and preferences of their members. Hopefully, doing so will afford members the opportunity to get to know one another, share ideas and innovate as needed to function effectively as both a local, community-based team as well as an important node of the six-zone, networked city-wide response system.

Also mentioned was the idea of scheduling a series of ACS meetings, perhaps at monthly or bi-monthly intervals, for both training and discussion of topics relevant for on-going team preparedness as well as for recruitment of new members. On this latter point, the recruitment and retention of ACS members was discussed as vital to the readiness and future of the organiza-

Seattle Auxiliary Communications Service Zone Map

See **ACS in a Changing World**, page 1

ACS, from Page 1

Our new Leadership Structure

ACS Manager, *Chief RACES Officer* – Mark Sheppard, N7LYE
ACS Assistant Manager, *Deputy Chief RACES Officer – <u>vacant</u>*
EOC Team Leader, *Assistant RACES Officer - <u>vacant</u>*
Northwest zone Team Leader, *Assistant RACES Officer* - Bill Ehler, K7NZV
Northwest zone Assistant Team Leader - <u>*vacant*</u>
Central-West zone Team Leader, *Assistant RACES Officer* – Dave Prince,WB0RAZ
Central-West zone Assistant Team Leader - <u>*vacant*</u>
Southwest zone Team Leader, *Assistant RACES Officer* - <u>*vacant*</u>
Southwest zone Assistant Team Leader - Kurt Black, WR5J
Northeast zone Team Leader, *Assistant RACES Officer* – George Boswell, K7YHB
Northeast zone Assistant Team Leader - <u>*vacant*</u>
Central-East zone Team Leader, *Assistant RACES Officer* – Matthew Thomas, KD7PPK
Central-East zone Assistant Team Leader - <u>*vacant*</u>
Southeast zone Team Leader, *Assistant RACES Officer* – Christopher Osburn, KD7DVD
Southeast zone Assistant Team Leader – <u>*vacant*</u>

ACS Staff Posts:

King County ARES Liaison, *Assistant RACES Officer* – William Dockstader, W7LSK
Net Manager, *Assistant RACES Officer* - Bill Ehler, K7NZV
QRV? **Newsletter Editor**, *Assistant RACES Officer* - Peter Smith, N7BYP

As you can see the first obvious target in our recruitment is to fill the vacancies in our leadership. We need you to step forward and help to get these six ACS Zone-Teams fully operational. Consider volunteering for a year to be co-leader of the team in your area… we'll talk more on the 20th.

Another part of the plan is to make our organization more vital, more fun and a great place to work with fellow hams sharing a common interest. We will schedule monthly meetings alternating between a week night and Saturdays. We will incorporate our leadership sessions into these meetings. We will emphasize training, projects and sharing technical knowledge and practices. ▬▬▬▬

Announcements

General Membership meeting
When: 9am – 11:00 Saturday November 20, 2004. **Where**: SPU Operations Center 2700 Airport Way So.
Purpose: Training and Planning for Spring Disaster Communications Drill.
Special note – EOC and Zone Team Leaders please plan on arriving at 8:30 to review recruitment maps and approach.
For Building access dial Mark's Cell at 206 510 7118 or 146.56 simplex

Special MST/ACS Holiday Meeting and Member Appreciation Lunch (Lunch provided)
When: 11am – 1:00 PM Saturday December 11, 2004. **Where**: SPU Operations Center 2700 Airport Way So.
Purpose: Our annual Joint Team meeting and Holiday Celebration - Members of the Medical Services Team and The Seattle ACS Team get together – share some training, fellowship and break bread.
For Building access dial Mark's Cell at 206 510 7118 or 146.56 simplex ▬▬▬▬

tion. George Boswell, K7YHB, and Jonathan Scherch, KK7PW offered to meet and discuss ideas toward the design of an ACS recruitment campaign for the coming year. Dave Prince, WB0RAZ mentioned that the UW ARC was becoming active again and so could be a resource for ACS. Also mentioned was the on-going series of ARRL EmComm training courses as a useful resource for ACS members (especially with full tuition reimbursement available through 2005). To date, 18 ACS members have completed the EmComm I course.

The meeting concluded with discussion of ideas for updating the ACS website and membership roster and the creation of printed materials for membership recruitment. With great anticipation for next steps, the meeting adjourned at approximately 2045. ▬ ▬ ▬ ▬

ACS Monday Evening Net
7:00 p.m.
146.96 MHz

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cially important mission.

How can we bring consistent *repeatability* to our commitment to ACS? Be sure to check into the Monday evening ACS net. Make it a priority to participate in ACS events whenever possible. Set aside a regular time to inform yourself about emergency communications by reading *QST* and visiting relevant websites. A regular and consistent reinforcement of our knowledge and commitment to emergency communications will go a long way. ▬ ▬ ▬ ▬